different dates due to retirement, promotion to higher grades, creation of new posts as a result of cadre re-structuring, officers proceeding on deputation, study leave and litigation. Steps have been initiated to fill up these vacant posts by promotion of officers from lower grades.

Direct Tax Collection

2016. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Direct Tax Collection has shown a sharp decline;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and measures proposed to be taken to enhance tax collection;

(c) whether it is also a fact that there is resentment among salaried class, both in PSUs and Government, for repeatedly being targeted when it comes to revenue generation, sparing the unorganised sector, including small and large commercial enterprises, which have scope for higher yield if properly tapped; and

(d) if so, the steps proposed to be taken for the purpose so as to provide some relief to the already burdened salaried class?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) No, Sir. On the contrary, Direct Tax Collections upto 30th November, 2002 show an increase of 13.73% over the Collections during the corresponding period of last year.

(b) Question does not arise in view of reply to para (a) above.

(c) and (d) The Income Tax Act, 1961 does not discriminate between the Salaried Employees of PSUs and the Government Employees and other Salaried Employees of Private Sector. The provisions for the Taxation of Salaried Employees cannot be compared with the Taxation of small and large Business Enterprises, as the two Incomes are different in their nature and scope. The Salaried Employees are entitled to Standard Deduction, which has been increased over the years, especially in the case of the lower level Salaried Employees. In particular the Finance Act, 2001 raised the Standard Deductions for the Salaried Class earning

income up to Rs.1,50,000 to Rs.30,000 as against the deductions of only Rs. 25,000 allowable for salaried income up to Rs.1 Lakh. For Salaried Employees earning income between Rs.1.5 lakh and Rs.3 lakhs, the limit was raised to Rs. 25,000 as against the earlier limit of Rs. 20,000. Thus, there is no case for discrimination.

The Finance Minister, in his Speech in the Lok Sabha on 31.7.2002, announced an increase in the deduction under section 80L, on income received by way of interest, dividend etc. from the existing limit of Rs.12,000/- to Rs.15,000/-. In the case of dividend income received, the threshold limit for not deducting TDS has also been raised from Rs.1000/- to Rs. 2,500/-. These benefits are available to all Assessees including Salaried Employees of the Government, PSUs and Private Sector.

Scheme for long term lending by banks

2017. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Reserve Bank of India is evolving a scheme whereby banks are facilitated to engage in long term lending;

(b) if so, the details in this regard and the reaction of the banks to the proposal; and

(c) whether this scheme would have any adverse impact on the borrowings of SSI units and the farming sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): (a) and (b) Reserve Bank of India had issued guidelines in April, 1999 to all commercial banks and all India financial institutions for financing of long-term financial requirements of infrastructure projects. These guidelines were modified in February, 2002;

(c) No adverse impact on the borrowings of SSI units and the farming sector is foreseen on account of implementation of these guidelines by the banks.